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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

THOMAS CAVANAUGH

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JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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INTERVIEWEE: Thomas C. Cavanaugh

INTERVIEWER: Anthony Tadey

TADEY: This is an interview with Thomas C. Cavanuagh, Sargeant of the Will County Sheriff's Police Department, for the Oral History Project at Joliet Junior College by interviewer Anthony Tadey on May 15, 1973 at 11:00 a.m.

TADEY: Where were you born?

CAVANAUGH: In Elwood, Illinois.

TADEY: Oh, yes, that's near the arnesal.

CAVANAUGH: Right, Elwood is just off what is now Route 53.

TADEY: What was the town like then, compared to now?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I was actually born on a farm. The town has not grown too much since I remember it as a little boy.

TADEY: Elwood never changed too much?

CAVANAUGH: No, these farm towns in Illinois never change much.

TADEY: Where did your family used to go, to Joliet? Where did you do your shopping?

CAVANAUGH: Well, Joliet and Wilmington for shopping and the church and then we did some shopping in Elwood, too. Well, I can give my age away by saying that I remember way back in the horse and buggy days. I can remember when my dad bought the first car in 1918.

TADEY: Were there many cars around in those days?

CAVANAUGH: Not too many.

TADEY: In Wilmington, was it common to see horses on the street?

CAVANAUGH: It was very common. There was hitching posts and everything in those days.

TADEY: Did you go to church in the buggy?

CAVANAUGH: Yes, we went to church in the buggy, and it was a big treat.

TADEY: Did you come to Joliet?

CAVANAUGH: Oh yes. I can remember coming to Joliet. Go by horse and buggy to Elwood and take the Joliet train into Joliet. I can also remember coming to Joliet with the horse.

TADEY: What train ran to Joliet?

CAVANAUGH: It was the Chicago, Alton at that time.

TADEY: It is no longer in existence?

CAVANAUGH: No, it has changed hands. It was the Chicago, Alton to B&O and then the Gulfmobile & Ohio and I guess now it is the Pennsylvania Gulfmobile.

TADEY: And those were passenger trains?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yes.

TADEY: Was the train mainly for the arsenal?

CAVANAUGH: No, there were passenger trains to Springfield on that road.

TADEY: Was the arsenal in Elwood then?

CAVANAUGH: No.

TADEY: What year did they build that?

CAVANAUGH: Right around 1940, I think, is when they started on that building, buying the property.

TADEY: It was for the Second World War then.

CAVANAUGH: Yes, the Second World War.

TADEY: How long did you live in Elwood?

CAVANAUGH: I left down there in 1937, '36 actually.

TADEY: Did you move to Joliet?

CAVANAUGH: I moved to Joliet. My parents stayed there and I moved to Joliet.

TADEY: What were you doing while living there?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, I worked construction for Powers Thompson over in Gary in sheet mills; and I worked for them here building roads and went down to the strip mine down in Wilmington.

TADEY: How did you make the decision to come to Joliet?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I just got tired of living on the farm and I left.

TADEY: Joliet was the big city?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I had a chance to get a job. I started out working for a farm implement man selling farm machinery.

TADEY: That was here in Joliet?

CAVANAUGH: Yes, in Joliet. But I left him to go to construction because it was more money. I made connections and got the job. He stayed in business about 15 years or more.

TADEY: Did you work construction in Joliet?

CAVANAUGH: I worked some construction in Joliet, road construction and such. I started out with them at the sheet mill in Gary.

TADEY: What did Joliet look like in those days?

CAVANAUGH: It really hasn't changed much, only that it has grown westward more. Of course, some of the southern parts, even down on Route 53, where it is 53 now, it used to be 4A in those days, has just grown bigger. That is all you can say. Of course, the viaducts have been put in. You used to have to stop for all the trains down on South Chicago Street.

TADEY: Were the streetcars there or was that before your time?

CAVANAUGH: They didn't have streetcars when I moved into Joliet. The streetcars were at an end. They had buses by then.

TADEY: They had a bus line here in town?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yes.

TADEY: How did you get on the police force after construction?

CAVANAUGH: I was working at the mine and the girl that I was going with at the time, her father was a city policeman, and he asked me why I didn't take the examination and try and get on with the department, more for steady employment. I mean, construction in those days was like it is now. Sometimes you worked and sometimes you didn't.

TADEY: Were you planning on getting married?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I hadn't really concentrated on the getting married, but I was going with the girl and I suppose indirectly we were, yes.

TADEY: How did the kids feel about policemen? I know the papers used to play up the gangsters a lot. That was the big thing during the 20's.

CAVANAUGH: As I remember it, of course, again it might have

been family training, I always had respect for police, deputy sheriffs, anybody with law enforcement. There was more respect than they have now.

TADEY: Yes, there was not so much anti-police feeling, but how were the kids in school? Were the gangsters big heroes? Did the read a lot about them?

CAVANAUGH: Well, not too much. I mean the news coverage wasn't as good as it is now, actually.

TADEY: Everybody knew who Al Capone was, didn't they?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yes. You heard about him and the likes of that, but not spectacular. You hear and read more about him in later years than you did then.

TADEY: Not in such a remote community as Elwood?

CAVANAUGH: No. We got a Chicago paper and the Joliet daily paper and that was all. Kids didn't read too much. They looked at the funnies and that was the news.

TADEY: But, joining the police, there were no mixed emotions?

CAVANAUGH: No.

TADEY: It was an honorable profession. . .

CAVANAUGH: It was an honorable profession and it was steady employment. From my acquaintances with the man who turned out to be my father-in-law, his friends, and policemen, I

developed a desire to become a policeman. I took the test and got a passing grade and was appointed.

TADEY: What were the questions on the test?

CAVANAUGH: They dealt quite a bit with, well actually, judgment. They tested you more on your judgment. Put you in situations and it was more of a review in those days. But now they use these tests that ask sensible questions, some of them mathematic, some to correct mistakes in English and grammar, and others present you with a problem where you write out an answer of what you would do and why. (Interruption)

TADEY: All right, we were talking about getting on the police department. Your father-in-law, what was he?

CAVANAUGH: Well, at that time he was the bridewell keeper on the city police department.

TADEY: What was that?

CAVANAUGH: Well, he was in charge at the station of the lock-up of all the prisoners and taking them to court. That was the title that they had on it. He had no rank except that he was called bridewell keeper.

TADEY: He was like a Jailer then?

CAVANAUGH: That's right. He was in charge of seeing that they were fed and so on and so forth.

TADEY: What did a jailer get paid in those days?

CAVANAUGH: He got regular police salary. I mean, everybody who worked there was regular police salary. At the time that I started the salary was $150.00 a month.

TADEY: Getting back to your father-in-law, did he start out as a regular police officer?

CAVANAUGH: That's right.

TADEY: What happened? When he got older did they put him on as a jailer?

CAVANAUGH: Actually, when he died he had only been a member of the department for 18 years. They just thought that he would make a good jailer. He did his beat time and all that, but he was made a bridewell keeper before I even became acquainted with him.

TADEY: Can you guess what his salary was then?

CAVANAUGH: It was the same as everybody's, $150.00 a month.

TADEY: That was starting pay?

CAVANAUGH: No, well, at the time when I first met him he was drawing $120.00 a month, and then you would get $10.00 a month raise. He finally got it up to $150.00 a month.

TADEY: You started at $150.00?

CAVANAUGH: I started at $150.00.

TADEY: What happens when you start with the police? How long did you have to wait after your application and your tests. . .

CAVANAUGH: I took the examination in August of '36 and went to work the first of February in '37.

TADEY: Why such a long wait?

CAVANAUGH: Well, they had to wait for an opening. A new budget came through, and they appropriated to have four men to the department.

TADEY: Was there a long waiting list like there is now to get on the police department?

CAVANAUGH: Yes, there was always a waiting list.

TADEY: What do you think was the main reason for this, the depression, jobs were hard. . .

CAVANAUGH: Depression, shortage of money, I mean, and again like it is now, they had to sell the people that you needed more help and more money to pay.

TADEY: Do you think there is any difference why you would want to become a policeman then and a policeman now? Different motivations.

CAVANAUGH: I don't know. I always say if you don't like it you shouldn't do it. If you try it and you don't like it, you should quit.

TADEY: Do they have a lot of guys who join and quit?

CAVANAUGH: Not too many. Truthfully, you have to get broken into it. I think the older ones coming out of the other system, I think we adjusted better to it better than some of the men that come out now of the different departments.

TADEY: From your personal knowledge, do they have a large turnover now in the police departments--Joliet and Will County?

CAVANAUGH: Not too large a turnover because of quitting or anything else; Joliet, of course, has turnover with retirements and so on and so forth.

TADEY: Are the police forces always growing?

CAVANAUGH: Yes, they are growing. I understand the City of Joliet is having an appropriation to put on 12 men in the very near future and to increase their department.

TADEY: When you started on the Joliet Police Department, how many men were on the total force?

CAVANAUGH: I think at that time, I am not missing it by very far, about 46 I believe, including the chief. He was a regular member of the department.

TADEY: How many shifts did they cover?

CAVANAUGH: Three shifts.

TADEY: Three shifts. What were the hours?

CAVANAUGH: Seven to three, three to eleven, eleven to seven.

TADEY: They didn't have anything like a relief shift like they do now?

CAVANAUGH: No, no. The detective shift worked eight to four and for special occasions or assignments, sometimes there was a crime wave or something going on at night, maybe they would work a shift of six at night until two in the morning.

TADEY: While you were waiting to get on the police department, did you have any doubts that you were going to get on or was it just a question of . . .

CAVANAUGH: It was just a question of sweating it out, waiting for there to be an opening.

TADEY: Did you have to know somebody to get on the police department?

CAVANAUGH: No. I didn't myself. I mean, I actually went in and took the test. I didn't try to make any connections or anything else. I just went strictly on my merits. Truthfully, I didn't expect to pass it the first time that I took it. I took it for experience really the first time. I was suprised that I came out fourth on the grades.

TADEY: What happened your first day when you reported for duty there. What kind of surprises did you run into?

CAVANAUGH: Well, it was below zero. I didn't dress right. It was one of these things where you reported for duty and you had to go out and borrow from this one and that one a full uniform. The only thing that was my own, actually, was my shoes and a pair of blue trousers. I had to borrow a coat, a hat, and a gun belt. I did own my own gun. I had bought that and reported for duty on the eleven to seven shift.

TADEY: They didn't call you in a few days early and give you a uniform then?

CAVANAUGH: No.

TADEY: Why was this?

CAVANAUGH: Well, all of a sudden they decided to put you to work and when they said to report in uniform you would ask them, "Well, where do you get it?" "Well, so and so is about your size; he is in plain clothes. Maybe he will let you wear his coat until you could order it." You had to order at that time and get them made up to fit.

TADEY: Were there police supplies or factories? Where did you get equipment from?

CAVANAUGH: At that time the majority of us on the department ordered from the National Clothing Store, Mr. Wolfson's Store. They came out of Ohio; he dealt with a uniform manufacturing place in Ohio.

TADEY: Did all of the Illinois police departments order from the same place?

CAVANAUGH: No, there were places in Chicago and so on and so forth. In those days nobody had the money and Mr. Wolfson would extend credit to the policemen. He was at times even supplying the prison guards with their uniforms and the state police and everybody else. And he extended credit. You had to go on credit; at $150.00 a month you aren't rich.

TADEY: Well, what did the uniforms look like and how much did they cost?

CAVANAUGH: The uniforms looked very much like the same uniform that the New York City police are wearing today. That is, the blouse buttoned to the neck with a row of buttons on each side.

TADEY: Did they have a summer uniform?

CAVANAUGH: Summer uniform? When I first started, it was the first year that they didn't wear the coats all summer. We went to sleeves and ties. A couple of years later we went to the short sleeve shirt with the open neck.

TADEY: From what you remember before that, though, they weren't allowed to wear shirts in the summertime? You had to wear a jacket of some kind?

CAVANAUGH: You wore the shirt and jacket. You couldn't take the blouse off. You had to call it a blouse. You wore

it all the time.

TADEY: No matter how hot it was?

CAVANAUGH: No matter how hot it was with the sam brown belt.

TADEY: It was regulation?

CAVANAUGH: Regulation.

TADEY: Well, let's see. What shift did you start on first?

CAVANAUGH: I started out the eleven to seven.

TADEY: And what was your route?

CAVANAUGH: On the south beat as it was called. It was south of Jefferson Street.

TADEY: That's South Chicago Street?

CAVANAUGH: Well, South Chicago Street down about three blocks south of the viaduct, as we know it the Rock Island viaduct, the beat ended and ran from the river down to Washington Street on the east and the river on the west.

TADEY: I know when the officers go on the beat today it is mostly just downtown Joliet.

CAVANAUGH: That's right.

TADEY: How large of an area did you walk?

CAVANAUGH: I'd say from Washington Street to the river and from Jefferson Street south for the business places down about three blocks below the viaduct. Just the business places were covered.

TADEY: Well, the city make-up was different then than it is now.

CAVANAUGH: It is different, yes. I mean there is a lot of buildings that were there then that are gone now.

TADEY: On South Chicago Street, what kind of neighborhood was that then?

CAVANAUGH: It was a business district there. It was integrated. It wasn't as it is now. It has turned into a majority of Blacks.

TADEY: How about Eastern Avenue? I heard that used to be the really fashionable section.

CAVANAUGH: It was. That was before I went on the department but it, Eastern Avenue, was the gold door knob section of Joliet at one time--Eastern and Richards Street.

TADEY: How was it in 1937? Was it declining then?

CAVANAUGH: No. I wouldn't say it was going downhill, but all of the expansion because of the limitations for buildings all went west. That is really why Joliet built west. I mean, they had built, you might say, out to the Rock Island

tracks, to Pilcher Park. There was actually only one way for them to go and that was west.

TADEY: Did you have to walk a beat on Eastern Avenue. Was that included or not?

CAVANAUGH: No, I never. As I say, there had been a revision shortly before I went on. After they got radios and cars, there had been a revision. There used to be beats that did cover residential neighborhoods before we got squad cars.

TADEY: I see, due to pressure from the citizens was the reason for a residential beat?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I had never heard it said that there was pressure, but you walked residential neighborhoods because there was businesses there.

TADEY: What did these people feel they had to be protected from?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, it was just general things. I mean, minor. At that time there were still break-ins, as we called it B&E's, "breaking and entering", burglaries and so on and so forth.

TADEY: Did people worry about crime in the streets then or wasn't it an issue?

CAVANAUGH: Not too much. There was, but we didn't really have too much of these muggings and things like that.

TADEY: Which shift did you first work?

CAVANAUGH: Eleven to seven.

TADEY: And you had to walk the beat on that shift?

CAVANAUGH: Right. I started at seven degrees below zero.

TADEY: What was that? A skeleton shift or were there many men on that shift?

CAVANAUGH: It was about the same as on the three to eleven shift. There were four beats covered at that time and then you had two men in the station and there was three detectives riding, three plain clothes riding in a car, and two-men squads in uniform.

TADEY: How did you feel working that first night in that cold weather?

CAVANAUGH: I was shaking, I'll admit it.

TADEY: From the cold. . .

CAVANAUGH: It was from the cold and nervous. I mean it was a new experience because you have to travel alleys and everything else.

TADEY: Did you see much that first night?

CAVANAUGH: Not too much, no. But it was always just this apprehension. You would have to go up and try the doors; you would have to try the front and back door of all business

places and it was just the apprehension of what was there.

TADEY: Yes.

CAVANAUGH: It didn't take too long to get used to it.

TADEY: How did they keep an eye on where you were at?

CAVANAUGH: Well, every hour you had to make a phone call. They had what you call call boxes set up that come in on ticker tape along with the man answering the phone. You would give your name and he would say all right or if he had any instructions for you, he would give them to you.

TADEY: Every hour you had to do this?

CAVANAUGH: Every hour. I mean it was split up so that two men were calling on the half hour, and two men were calling on the hour.

TADEY: How long did you have to walk a beat?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, I walked the beat. I went in the service in '42. I walked it from '37 to '42.

TADEY: You did have squad cars?

CAVANAUGH: We did have squad cars.

TADEY: How many were on the police force when you started?

CAVANAUGH: When I started there were three all together. There were two squad cars with uniformed men riding in them

and then there was one detective car.

TADEY: What did those cars look like?

CAVANAUGH: The ones when I first started were old Chevrolets. One of them was a two-door coach as they were called at that time. The other one had side curtains on it, a touring car with side curtains.

TADEY: What were the curtains for?

CAVANAUGH: Well, what they were made out of at that time, I guess you couldn't call it a vinyl. We used to call it Ising glass. You could roll them up if the weather was good.

TADEY: What did they have on the cars? Did they have a siren or flashing light?

CAVANAUGH: They had a siren on the car. There was no red light mounted asyou see them today on top. That was quite a rarity to get them. I mean, there was a red light on the front fender mounted with the siren.

TADEY: Did they have sirens like today or did they call it a gong? Was the siren always around or is that an invention of later years?

CAVANAUGH: Well, when I started it was a siren. We didn't have the gong. The fire department had the gong; they had a siren and they had the gong when they were coming back from the fire. A bell was actually called the gong.

TADEY: How was the police department broken up in the different divisions?

CAVANAUGH: Well, at that time they had the patrol division and a traffic division.

TADEY: Was it the same as it is now or did they have more divisions?

CAVANAUGH: They have more now than they had then.

TADEY: How many divisions offhand would be in the police department.

CAVANAUGH: Well, they now have the youth section, the crime prevention and it is broken down more in communications along with those divisions.

TADEY: Well, getting into the traffic division. Did they have certain squad cars assigned to traffic?

CAVANAUGH: The traffic actually was either foot patrol or they had the motorcycles. The motorcycles were actually the traffic division.

TADEY: How heavy was traffic then?

CAVANAUGH: There were quite a few cars and there were very few traffic lights. Take on Saturdays and Friday nights and Saturday nights some of the stores were open. Even on Saturday nights you had to get out on the corner and whistle the traffic, just to take care of what the traffic lights take

care of now. Just stand out in the middle of the intersection.

TADEY: How many accidents occured? Did you have a lot of accidents compared to now?

CAVANAUGH: Percentage-wise I think the accidents were probably less than they are now, but you still had some drivers who were careless. I'll put it that way.

TADEY: How could a car in those days take a collision? Were the accidents more serious? Did you get many injuries? How did they make the cars? Were they much better than the ones today?

CAVANAUGH: They were much solider. They would hold up better under a collision than they do now.

TADEY: What were the tickets you usually issued?

CAVANAUGH: Well, the tickets were not a multa-copy ticket like you have now. It was all on one ticket, and it was filled out by the city ordinance for speeding, or stop sign, improper parking so on and so forth.

TADEY: How stiff were the fines then?

CAVANAUGH: An ordinary speeding fine at that time was $7.25. That was $2.25 cost and $5.00 for the fine.

TADEY: How about parking tickets?

CAVANAUGH: Parking tickets. I used to go along and chalk the cars and mark it for an hour of parking instead of parking meters. The fine would be $3.00 for overtime parking.

TADEY: Same as now almost.

CAVANAUGH: Yes. That was work. You had to walk around the streets and mark the cars with a piece of chalk for the amount of time and the come along and check it; that was hard work.

TADEY: You say that $3.00 is about the same as it is now. Why? How come it hasn't gone up?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I don't know. I mean, $3.00 then was worth probably an equivalent to about $10.00 now--I mean in value by your earning power.

TADEY: That was a pretty stiff fine then, right?

CAVANAUGH: It was quite a stiff fine. It was to promote people moving their cars for parking. There was a parking problem then as there is now.

TADEY: Did they have parking meters anywhere in town?

CAVANAUGH: They didn't have any parking meters when I was with the city.

TADEY: No parking meters in the town at all?

CAVANAUGH: No. The only way that you could enforce the hour of parking was with a chalk mark on the tire.

TADEY: You had to check all of these cars?

CAVANAUGH: You had to check them; you had to walk and check them.

TADEY: That was a lot of work. Do you remember what year the parking meter came in?

CAVANAUGH: I don't want to venture a guess; I'm not just sure.

TADEY: Do you have a general idea?

CAVANAUGH: General idea, oh, I would say someplace up in the early 50's was when they really got the first parking meters.

TADEY: Was the parking meter an invention then or did other cities have them?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I don't know. Evidently some other towns had them. There has been improvement on them all along. It used to be you would put a penny in and get 12 minutes, an hour for a nickel.

TADEY: It used to be a penny then?

CAVANAUGH: A penny for 12 minutes and so on. They have cut it out now.

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TADEY: What kind of sections did you have? I think on Jefferson Street we're having trouble with prostitutes now. Did Joliet have a "red light" section?

CAVANAUGH: Unofficially yes, officially no. But there were certain areas that were limited to a certain element of the Blacks on north Scott Street up near Columbia Street.

TADEY: Near the steel mill?

CAVANAUGH: Up near the steel mill, and then there was a couple more on the east side, Clay Street and up on Liberty Street.

TADEY: Did they have any white prostitutes in this town?

CAVANAUGH: Not in the city. There wasn't any white prostitutes, that is, any houses that I ever knew of. There were some outside.

TADEY: Then, like now, the prostitution was confined mostly to the Blacks.

CAVANAUGH: That's right. I mean, operating close by. The rest of it was near a county line or something so that if they were going to be raided, they could duck over the county line.

TADEY: On Caton Farm Road and Broadway or old Rt.66, I heard stories of syndicate prostitution at the old road house.

CAVANAUGH: That's right. Elsie's.

TADEY: Elsie's? Do you have any rememberances of that?

CAVANAUGH: Well, it was out of Joliet's jurisdiction, the city's jurisdiction. That is, I heard stories and remembered about it. It had quite a reputation, and it was quite an exclusive, fairly high-class group of prostitutes.

TADEY: Who was that run by? The big-time syndicate?

CAVANAUGH: It was supposedly connected with the syndicate, and a person would have to judge that it was operated by the syndicate.

TADEY: How far back, from just hearing stories, was that place in operation?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, that was back in the 30's. It probably started along in '35 and from there on up. It went out of business along around '40 or'42.

TADEY: It would be fair to say then that organized prostitution would have been out of the city.

CAVANAUGH: That's right.

TADEY: It would have been free|lance stuff.

CAVANAUGH: It was all free lance stuff.

TADEY: Did Joliet have a skid row? Where did all the drunks hang out?

CAVANAUGH: Well, the majority of the drunks, the canned

heaters as we called them, hung out down around south Joliet Street, LaFayette Street and the railroad tracks where the Rock Island freight house is now and the wholesale houses that were down along in there.

TADEY: Were they the classic hobo type that came off the trains?

CAVANAUGH: Some of them, and some of them were natives that just fell by the wayside due to alcoholism.

TADEY: Where was the saloon section at?

CAVANAUGH: Saloon section? There were some right in the loop, then up on Collins Street and the northeast side up near the mill; down on South Chicago Street there were a couple, particularly close in on Chicago Street.

TADEY: There was no section per say then, no "skid row?"

CAVANAUGH: No, no. Definitely not. Collins Street up near Reilly's hill probably had the biggest majority of the saloons.

TADEY: How did the police treat drunks? Did they tolerate them?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yes, we had tolerance with them, but you couldn't let them wander around and get hit by a car. So you had to take them in and lock them up, sober them up. Usually they would go before the judge the next morning and he would fine them and remit the fine. There was a regular stamp on

the docket "remit it." At least he was sobered up so he wouldn't get hurt.

TADEY: If the guy couldn't pay his fine, what would he get?

CAVANAUGH: Unless they were really habituals and you got tired of them at that time you would "vag them" and send them to Vandalia for six months or a year.

TADEY: What was that term again?

CAVANAUGH: Vag--vag them, vagrancy.

TADEY: Oh, and send them down to Vandalia?

CAVANAUGH: Send them down to Vandalia?

TADEY: As a rule you didn't want them hanging around the jail?

CAVANAUGH: That's right, after you get tired of them. There wasn't such a thing as dealing out a touch fine. There were a few who would maybe be given four or five days who we would use as trustees around the police station or city detail. We would take out three or four for cutting grass or the likes of it.

TADEY: Because of the Depression, do you think there were more alcoholics then than there is now, or were drunks looking for a free ride to get into the jail for a night?

CAVANAUGH: Quite possibly. We used to handle quite a few

a night, oh four or five a night. There were those who had slipped that way because of Prohibition. That had gotten in the habit; they had gotten bad booze and couldn't control themselves. I wouldn't say there were as many apprehended then as now.

TADEY: Getting into another thing now, did you say they had a juvenile section of the police department?

CAVANAUGH: They have one now; they didn't when I started.

TADEY: How would they handle a juvenile then when they brought him in?

CAVANAUGH: Well, actually there wasn't too many brought in, and if there was a juvenile involved in something, then he was usually taken home and talked to by his parents there. His father would hand out the punishment after he found out what the kid had done. A lot of times it was petty. He would steal something in a store and the likes of that.

TADEY: He wouldn't even go to trial then?

CAVANAUGH: No. I mean if it was real serious, and to my knowledge I can't even remember. . . I mean, the kids mostly would get into natural fist fights and everything else. You never would grow up to be a man if you didn't have fist fights in those days, getting whipped a few times and whipping somebody else. But when it got a little rough and a club or something like that was used or the parents

complained that somebody got drastically hurt, then you took the kid home and his father took care of it.

TADEY: In those days they trusted the parents with this?

CAVANAUGH: That's right.

TADEY: Did you ever run into drugs in those days?

CAVANAUGH: No, I can't say. If you did, it was some adult that had gotten it through starting on medication or something like that. We didn't have the drug problem.

TADEY: It was mostly morphine then or. . .?

CAVANAUGH: Morphine then. I mean, they didn't have the drugs like they have today. It was morphine, and it was quite tightly controlled and we didn't really have a drug problem. The biggest drug problem was your alcoholic.

TADEY: I know there was such a thing as heroin. You never had any incidents with it?

CAVANAUGH: No, not until after getting up into the late 50's and 60's were you running into any of the heroin. That was an aftermath of World War II. Somewhere in the Pacific area particularly or the Indochina our men returning would be addicted.

TADEY: Did you ever hear of drug addiction?

CAVANAUGH: No, it was more hush-hush. If there was somebody that was on it, it was more of a hush-hush thing, and

they would try and keep it quiet. The only drugs the doctor would issue was a prescription or something like that.

TADEY: Then there was no problem. There probably would have been no way to handle it then. Was it illegal then?

CAVANAUGH: Well, it was always illegal. I can remember the Federal Government had a man that would come in and take inventory in the drug store and check it [morphine] against the prescriptions and so on and so forth. And they had to keep good records on who got it. It had to balance out, in other words. I had friends from walking the beat that I got acquainted with, and they showed me their records and they had to keep fairly stiff records. Along that line, you might put it in here, actually rubber contraceptives at that time were under the same control.

TADEY: They were illegal?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, that's right.

TADEY: Where would they come from?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I mean there was always this black market on them. You could call it the black market or whatever it was. But, I mean, if they were dispensed by a drug store, they had to order through under a certain quota and keep a record of it for the federal authorities. It was checked by the alcoholic tax division of the Treasury Department.

TADEY: I didn't know about that, the rubber contraceptives.

How many other things that we take for granted today, maybe sort of harmless, were illegal then? Were there any unusual city ordinances?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, I can't think of any. At that time, of course, you needed no gun permit to go in and buy a hand gun if you were of age, and ammunition wasn't controlled. It was only after it began to get abused that they had to put controls on that.

TADEY: It is just the opposite now?

CAVANAUGH: Just the opposite away around now.

TADEY: How old did you have to be to buy a hand gun?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I would say, for a fellow, twenty-one if he had a good reason. They weren't as expensive as they are now; they weren't as plentiful either. There wasn't much of a demand for them. And practically the only ones who had pistols were law enforcement officers or somebody who bought one to have in their home. Farmers had them because they never knew when they might have to dispose of an animal that might break a leg or something like that. A majority of them were for legitimate purposes, outside of what we will say the hoddlums or those who were armed robbers.

TADEY: What were the laws against guns? Could you carry them?

CAVANAUGH: There was always a law against carrying guns,

if you concealed weapons, as far as that goes in state and city ordinances. Quite often you would pick somebody up with a gun and, of course, the gun was confiscated and he was charged with carrying a concealed weapon.

TADEY: What happens if the guy carries his gun in a holster out in the open?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I never saw anyone do it, really.

TADEY: Well, out west they still do that.

CAVANAUGH: Out west in some places they still do. I have seen in even in the last few years out in some of those remote towns where they still do it. But they have permits under the law, or the state does, that let them if they are ranchers or something.

TADEY: Well, let's see, we will get into the courts now. How were the judges. . . are any of the judges around today that were there in the '30's?

CAVANAUGH: In our present circuit, no. There is none of them that were actually on the bench serving around about that time.

TADEY: Do you feel that the judges' way of thinking has changed from then to now?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I believe that it has. I mean, along with the trend of everybody else to try and rehabilitate people

and to make citizens out of them. The judges, I believe, have changed. And they have been forced to change if they didn't want to, by the changes of the law, the acts of the counties and such, along with some of the rulings of the Supreme Court.

TADEY: If you brought a defendant before the judge in those days, did he give the guy a pass the first time around like they do now?

CAVANAUGH: If it was for a minor offense, he might give him a pass or what we call a suspended fine hanging over him. If it was a violation of the city ordinance, they might fine him and leave it hanging over him. If they behaved themselves, it was a form of probation that if he got in no more trouble for say a year, then the fine was wiped off; the charge was wiped off the book.

TADEY: Well, what would they do if a person committed a felony? Would the judges tend to be stiff in sentencing?

CAVANAUGH: I would say yes. At that time when they went to trial, and if they were found guilty, the penalties were much more severe than they are today.

TADEY: What would robbery for a first offense bring? Was armed robbery a common crime?

CAVANAUGH: They had armed robbery. Again, I would have to go back. It would come along pretty much with a minimum of

ten years, maybe ten years to life under the statutes. The judge that was hearing them at the time, Judge Barkely, was on the bench at that time and he was hearing most of those type of cases. He didn't hesitate to mete out the sentences.

TADEY: How many times did you have to go into court, let's say from the time you went into the police department until you went into the army?

CAVANAUGH: From the time I started, the first five years I only went to court--actually ended up in magistrate court, which is minor misdemeanors--three times.

TADEY: Did you get a conviction there?

CAVANAUGH: All were found guilty and were convicted, yes.

TADEY: They got sentences?

CAVANAUGH: They got sentences. One of them was on appeal. I remember real well. It was on an appeal from the magistrates court where he had been found guilty and fined for drunken driving and resisting arrest. They took an appeal and went over to Judge Barkely's court.

TADEY: Well, you were pretty happy with the judicial system?

CAVANAUGH: At that time, yes.

TADEY: You lose more cases now?

CAVANAUGH: Well, the technicalities, they get a little rough.

TADEY: If you got a guy you know committed a crime and you do something wrong, he can get off?

CAVANAUGH: That's right.

TADEY: How do the policemen feel about that these days?

CAVANAUGH: Well, it hurts. Actually we feel that all law enforcement officers, if you talk to them, will tell that the laws today are on the side of the offender, not with the prosecution or those that are trying to enforce the laws.

TADEY: Was the mayor at that time the supervisor of the police department?

CAVANAUGH: Well, the city when I went on was on the commission form of government, and you had the mayor and four commissioners. We had the Commissioner of Public Health and Safety, and he supposedly and primarily was in charge of the police and fire department. Of course, indirectly again, politics and the mayor had some control; and quite possibly when the Chief of Police was named, if a man didn't have the blessings of the mayor and the commissioner, well, he didn't get to be Chief of Police.

TADEY: They were appointed by the mayor?

CAVANAUGH; They were moved up in the ranks, but there was no examination at that time. I mean they were appointed by the Police and Fire Board, but, after all, he had appointed the Police and Fire Board. To get to the top spot, a lot of

times you had to have the blessing, put it that way, of the mayor.

TADEY: Who was the mayor in 1937?

CAVANAUGH: When I came on George T. Jones was mayor.

TADEY: Did they call him Jigger Jones?

CAVANAUGH: They called him Jigger Jones.

TADEY: Do you have any stories about him? I heard he was a colorful character.

CAVANAUGH: He was. He used the four letter words that we hear today quite fluently and everything else if he was excited. He was a good mayor; he believed in strict law enforcement of the city ordinances. And he was fair to that degree; I mean he had no favorites. If a tavern was open after hours, it didn't matter if it was one he would drink in, he meted out the suspensions to them. I mean it wasn't any of this closing up on dull days. They got closed up for a period of time and maybe lost their license.

TADEY: Do you remember when he ran for office? Was law enforcement or law and order an issue in the campaign in those days?

CAVANAUGH: I remember when he was elected for the first term. I wasn't on the department or hadn't taken the examination at the time. He ran, as I remember, stressing

that he was going to upgrade the police department and have more men and add more law enforcement. Yes, it was an issue to the degree that he felt that there had been some favoritism prior.

TADEY: What did the people complain about concerning the police department or were there many complaints?

CAVANAUGH: Well, the main complaints, again the people as a whole weren't complaining, but you had these complaints that so and so gets by with this and I don't. In other words, a tavern keeper could stay open prior to Jones, if he was in good and there was an order out that you don't check that place. And that was one of the big arguments. There was favoritism being shown by some. Whether it came from the order of the mayor down through the department or what, I don't want to say; I wasn't there to get the order.

TADEY: But as far as you know, Mayor Jones didn't play favorites?

CAVANAUGH: He played no favorites.

TADEY: What was his last year in office?

CAVANAUGH: I'm not just sure.

TADEY: Was he a two-term mayor?

CAVANAUGH: He was a two-term mayor.

TADEY; Something about the bridges here in town, my father

often talks about Jones having something to do with the bridges.

CAVANAUGH: Oh yes, he fought for bridges. I guess that was even before he was elected mayor; he managed to get the bridges in. Again, I can't remember too much about that part of it.

TADEY: Who was the police chief in 1937?

CAVANAUGH: '37? Nicholas Fernango was the chief.

TADEY: And he worked his way up through the ranks?

CAVANAUGH: He came up through the ranks, yes.

TADEY: How many years did he serve as police chief?

CAVANAUGH: Again, I am going to have to guess. I would say at least nine.

TADEY: Do you have any personal stories about him? Was he a law and order man or a hard man to work for?

CAVANAUGH: He was a good disciplinarian. I mean, with the men he was fair. I got to say he was fair, and when he was chief under Mayor Jones, the mayor wanted it fair and that was the way he operated. His hands weren't tied. I mean, the order came out that you were to enforce the ordinances and Fernango insisted, and he was a fair man with the men working under him. He always went to bat to try to help get more wages, better conditions, more men.

TADEY: What did he want from his men exactly?

CAVANAUGH: He wanted a day's work for a day's pay.

TADEY: And how would he check up on you? Would he be out in the field himself?

CAVANAUGH: Well, he would be out in the field some. At that time, of course, again I say, that your desk sargeants had quite a responsibility. The ticker tape recorded the calls, and you had to log them on a sheet and you also saved those tapes. He would come in and would punch out the boxes he knew. He would check and he had his captains and sargeants checking on the men, too. He held them responsible; he follwed the chain of command.

TADEY: Where did he have his office, right down at the police station?

CAVANAUGH: In the police station, yes.

TADEY: Where was that located?

CAVANAUGH: 76 North Joliet Street. It is part of a parking lot now directly west of Barrett's.

TADEY: Could you describe the building?

CAVANAUGH: It was a quite big building, two stories. On the first floor, of course, there was the squad room. The chief's office eventually was on the first floor and next to that towards the back of the building was your shift

commander or captain's office, then the radio room, the desk sargeant, booking room; and, of course, in the back was what we called the bullpen which was the general lock-up for minor misdemeanors. On the second floor were cells that would hold up to six people. There was always one of them that you kept in case you had any female prisoners.

TADEY: Then they had the jail right in the police station?

CAVANAUGH: That's right.

TADEY: What happened if a person was convicted of a crime?

CAVANAUGH: Well, if it was a felony, the same procedure the city police use now. There was a temporary lock-up, as we would say, and then they were transferred over to the county facility to be held for trial over in the circuit court.

TADEY: What were the facilities of the police station jail?

CAVANAUGH: Well, you had a kitchen and got one fairly warm meal a day. The majority of the meals were bread and bologna and coffee. That was the biggest extent of the means because it was only a temporary holding.

TADEY: Did they have isolation up there in case a prisoner was too rowdy?

CAVANAUGH: Well, yes. I mean, even down in the bullpen there was a cage with nothing but steel bars. They were put in there if they were too rowdy.

TADEY: I think you mentioned something once before that in those days it would be permissible or legal to hold a prisoner without charging him with a crime for a length of time?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, I saw them held for two or three days before a charge was made. As long as you had him under investigation you didn't take them into court.

TADEY: Was that used to make a prisoner confess?

CAVANAUGH: Well, to a degree while you were investigating it. Back in those days, and even today a lot of times, you know you have got the right man but it is just coming up with the absolute evidence that would stand up in court. You weren't forced to take them into court and release them on bond so that you can maybe confront or have people view them. But in a few cases where you would lose them if you want a physical visual line-up. He is out on bond under the statutes before you can get your witnesses or assemble people that have some of the same characteristics and build. You can't take a six-foot fellow or a six-seven foot man and put him among five-foot people and have people look at him and pick him out. You have to try and even them all with the size under the new statutes so that it isn't too obvious that you want them to put their finger on so and so.

TADEY: Back in the 30's it wouldn't be like that then?

CAVANAUGH: No, it wouldn't be like that. Then you would

look a fellow up in the cell and a party would come in and have a complaint against an individual and you would go and call him over to the door and look at him and say, "Is this the guy?" I mean, there wasn't any mixing him up with any three or four people or anything else.

TADEY: And what is it today? If you bring a guy in do you have to charge him with a crime?

CAVANAUGH: You have got to charge him, and then, of course, he is entitle to make bond unless he is charged with a felony. You can insist that he go before a magistrate, and the law says that you must take him before the magistrate at the earliest possible time or into court at the earliest possible time. So if we arrested a man at 9:00 this morning, technically, we would have to take him to court at 1:30 this afternoon, and the judge could set bond on him and he could be gone before you got through with the investigation.

TADEY: What is your rate of convictions? With those methods and the methods of now, do you get a criminal convicted more often?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, I would say that probably we got three out of four then, to one conviction out of four now.

TADEY: What changed it?

CAVANAUGH: The charges weren't dismissed. I mean, they went into court and nine times out of ten they would plead

guilty and, as I say, if it was something that wasn't too serious you'd either make restitution or get a suspended fine or short jail term, something like that. They wanted to get it over with. There wasn't as many attorneys around making a living saying, "No, you don't want to do that."

TADEY: Was there anything like a bail bondsman?

CAVANAUGH: Well, the bond at that time was higher. If you wanted to get out on bond you had to have the full cash money. If the bond was $500, you had to have $500. You didn't have to have just 10% or 50%.

TADEY: Well then, you are saying that these days it is easier and in those days it was a little rougher.

CAVANAUGH: It was a little bit rougher. There's more loop holes today that a guy can beat the rap with.

TADEY: Can you give me an incident?

CAVANAUGH: Well, as a humorous incident, I will put it this way. The State's Attorney's office when I first went on the department had an individual whose name was Ed Powers. He was called Foxy Powers. He always stopped at the police station on his way over to the State's Attorney's office to see what went on. We had a group at that time that were causing some troubles on breaking into places and stealing cars and the likes. It so happened that this Foxy Powers had a friend who had a store on East Cass Street, and the

man at one time had won a championship as a woodchopper. He had a silver-plated ax and this ax disappeared. Foxy Powers called this individual out. We felt we had the right one. So his ultimatum was, "Listen, I am going to turn you loose," and he had the powers to do it at that time. "I am going to turn you loose, but if that ax isn't over in my office by noon, you are all going to the penitentiary for at least ten years." The ax was delivered to him at 11 o'clock in the morning.

TADEY: Was that an idle threat or could he have delivered?

CAVANAUGH: He could have went through with it.

TADEY: Really?

CAVANAUGH: Well, he had connections again with the court. But this is the way Foxy operated. He told them he wanted that ax back, so that case went out the window. We later got the guys for another burglary.

TADEY: No, Powers was the State's Attorney?

CAVANAUGH: He was the investigator for the State's Attorney.

TADEY: Who was the State's Attorney?

CAVANAUGH: Jimmy Burke was the State's Attorney at that time. He was a very fine fellow and prosecuting attorney.

TADEY: Is that any relation to the Sammy Burke, the councilman?

CAVANAUGH: No, no relation.

TADEY: Do you think you enjoyed it more in those days or do you think you enjoy it more now?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I have enjoyed my whole career as a policeman. I enjoyed it then, and I enjoy it now. I would say that actually I started in the days when being a policeman you still had to be rough and rugged. Today you have to devote more time to the more scientific and exacting aspects than you did in those days because of the changes in the law. But it has been a nice career, and I still intend to stick around for a while.

TADEY: How do you feel about the efficiency of police departments with these new devices at your side?

CAVANAUGH: You still have to go to school to keep up with them. They are a great aid as far as police work, I mean. Take our radio alone. If an officer gets in trouble, all he has to do is call. You do have support and good coverage. Modern things are making the work easier but all along the line remember that when the police department gets the modern equipment big crime has also got the same equipment.

TADEY: Probably.

CAVANAUGH: We have to combat them modernly.

TADEY: It's an even fight?

CAVANAUGH: That's right. It is still whoever comes up with the best at the right time in a way. I'm speaking of big crime. If you were to move into your dope problem, it is still controlled by some people in this country; it is going to be quite a while before it is brought under control. However, I think that they will get them.

TADEY: If people complain about inefficiency in the police department these days, like you say, it is mostly even. Today you probably have more crimes, different troubles, different areas to go into which probably cuts down on your efficiency?

CAVANAUGH: Well, yes. But also percentage wise, I can't say that crime has increased that much; the population has become so much more, too. At the time I started to be a policeman, the sign used to say 42,000 population. It says 80,000 now.

TADEY: So the problems are about the same but they have multiplied?

CAVANAUGH: That's right. And more mobility as far as the individual is concerned.

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